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ABSTRACT

A study was undertaken to investigate, from a uses and gratifications perspective, the effects of serious television drama shown in a foreign country. Specifically, the study examined the impact of "Roots," a highly acclaimed American television drama on slavery, in Great Britain and provided comparisons with the findings of "Roots" research available in the United States. The results of the study showed that serious television drama from America, as exemplified by "Roots," evoked as much, if not more, positive reaction from British viewers as from American viewers and provided them with important viewing gratifications in terms of attitude change, identification, and social learning. (FL)

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"ROOTS" IN BRITAIN: A USES AND GRATIFICATIONS ANALYSIS*

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"ROOTS" IN BRITAIN: A USES AND GRATIFICATIONS ANALYSIS

While there is increasing argument in the current "free flow of information" debates that the importation of foreign television programs brings with it the importation of a foreign culture,[1] relatively little is known about the cultural effects of television programs in foreign cultures. Tsai have inquired into the effects of American television programs on Formosan children and found that exposure to American television programs did not influence the children's fundamental outlook in their own culture, but was likely to influence their specific attitudes toward the American culture.[2] In a study of cross-cultural broadcasting between Canada and the United States, however, Sparkes noted that there was very little attitudinal difference or effect associated with watching the foreign television news programs.[3]

Recently, four studies have examined the relationship between prejudice and viewing/perception of "All in the Family" in cross-cultural or other cultural settings. Vidmar and Rokeach, Surlin and Tate, and Tate and Surlin have shown a consistent relationship within both Canadian and American settings between high dogmatism/ethnocentrism and liking/agreement with Archie Bunker, the major bigoted character in "All in the Family."[4] Their conclusion was, therefore, that the effects of "All in the Family" lay in reinforcing existing beliefs, irrespective of the cultural setting. In a study of the Dutch audience of "All in the Family," however, Wilhoit and de Bock noted that the series did not have a reinforcement effect on persons with high ethnocentism; though some selective processes were noted in the Dutch audience, they did not seem to prevent the basic satirical messages of the program from getting through the Dutch audience.[5]

At least from these limited studies, the cultural effects of television programs in foreign cultures, then, appear to be cognitive (i.e., image formation,

awareness, and understanding) rather than attitudinal change. Such findings are not unfamiliar in mass communication research. Studies of mass media effects have long demonstrated the limited incidence of direct media effects and abduced a range of intervening variables, such as selective exposure and selective perception, that mediate direct effects.[6] The lack of direct attitudinal change from media exposure has thus led mass communication researchers to shift their focus to various cognitive effects in recent years. Uses and gratifications research has emerged as one of such attempts. This approach treats uses and gratifications sought or experienced by the audience as intervening variables standing between mass communicated messages and their impact upon the audience. The approach proceeds from the hypothesis that audience members are active agents whose media use satisfies both social and personal needs.[7]

The present study attempted to investigate the cultural effects of a television entertainment series shown in a foreign culture from a uses and gratifications perspective. More specifically, the study examined how the British audience viewed and reacted to "Roots," an American television drama on slavery. The study particularly focused on the relationship between types of viewing experiences and reactions and those of viewing gratification viewers have derived from watching the series. As Stepehson points out, the mass media consumption includes a peculiar kind of emotional satisfaction that is self-contained within the consuming experience itself.[8] One of the problems associated with the uses and gratifications approach is that it often fails to link functions of the mass media consumption with the symbolic content of the mass communicated materials or with the actual experience of consuming them. This problem becomes particularly acute when we study uses and gratifications of television, since television viewing performs a variety of functions that are often associated with viewing experiences.[9] It would be, therefore, a mistake to ignore such experiences audience members may derive from watching

television.

"Roots," ABC-TV's unprecedent 12-hour dramatization of Alex Haley's family saga, was a unique television event. Its highly emotional portrayal of the birth, growth, and death of individuals and social institutions (particularly slavery) in a docudrama format not only attracted the largest audience in the history of American television, but also caused a phenomenal public reaction across the country. Various media accounts in America reported how viewers expressed feelings of guilt, agony, anger, sadness and sympathy in response to the nightly episode of the "Roots" series.[10] Interestingly, similar reaction to the "Roots" series was reported in some foreign countries. In South Africa, thousands of people were reported to pack the local theaters where the U.S. International Communication Agency arranged the showing of "Roots" and responded to the series with "fury and tears."[11] In Japan, the series with Japanese dubbings recorded a phenomenal popularity in prime time commercial network showings.[12] Media critics in America attributed the phenomenal popularity of "Roots" to the strength of its thematic content and the power of its visual images. Some argued that "Roots" had everything good drama should have--soul-stirring subject matter, solid writing, brilliant acting, and quality production values.[13]

Sociological research in "Roots" has also provided some insight into the viewing and impact of "Roots" in America. Some of the most important points which Surlin found corroborating evidence were: (1) the series was perceived as accurately depicting slavery in the United States and had high emotional impact on viewers, eliciting feelings of guilt/sadness from white viewers and feelings of anger/hostility from black viewers; (2) the series had significant "social learning effects" on viewers with increased understanding of slavery history, but was not likely to produce the expected attitude change; (3) there was much post-viewing discussion about the series, but with different degrees between high authoritarian and low authoritarian viewers; and (4) high authori-

tarian viewers were most apt to selectively perceive salient content of the series in order to reinforce preexisting personal biases.[14] Thus, most of the findings in "Roots" research dealt with the relationship between racial attitudes and viewing/perception of the series; relatively little attention has been paid to the relationsip between emotional feelings and the impact of the series.

The major purposes of this study were two-fold: first, to investigate the impact of "Roots" in Great Britain, a foreign country somewhat further removed from the topic of black slavery dealt in the series, from a uses and gratifications perspective and, second, to facilitate comparisons with the findings of "Roots" research available in the United States.

Methods

The study's sample was drawn from the 1,258 viewing panel members selected and utilized by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) to study the reactions to specific television fare broadcast on the BBC channels across time. A total of 829 panel members responded to the mail survey conducted by the BBC Audience Research Division, with a completion rate of 66%. Of these, 15 members failed to provide answers on many questions in the special questionnaire designed for "Roots" and were thus excluded from the analysis. The resulting 814 respondents consisted of 41% males and 59% females and had a mean age range of 30-49 years old. The average educational level achieved was "some high school," and a majority of the respondent were of middle and lower social class background. Thus, those who completed the questionnaire matched the total British population rather well in terms of sex, age, education and social class.

The mail survey was completed in May 1977 after BBC-1 had broadcast the "Roots" series over a month's period--three consecutive nights over the Easter weekend and on each of the following three Sunday evenings. This was in contrast

to the one week's concentrated presentation on ABC in the United States.

The questionnaire, which was specially designed for "Roots" by the BBC Audience Research Division with some minor input from American researchers,[15] consisted of some 100 items concerning viewing and reactions to "Roots," racial attitudes, and demographic characteristics. The questions concerning "Roots" consisted of items on the viewing patterns, items designed to measure overall viewer reactions and feelings toward the series on five-point adjective scales, items designed to measure viewing gratifications and viewer opinions about the series using a series of descriptive statements on the Likert scale, and open-ended questions concerning the perceived effects of the series and other comments about the series. To determine the structure of the British viewers' responses to "Roots" and the consistency of those responses, items measuring viewer reactions and feelings were intercorrelated and factor analyzed. This procedure was repeated separately for items measuring viewing gratifications. Principal factor analyses with varimax rotation were performed, using a minimum eigenvalue of 1.0. In addition, a summary score denoting reactions to "Roots" was computed to see overall reaction patterns by summing up the score on each of the items used.

The measures of racial attitudes consisted of four questions: the first item that was most directly related to "Roots" asked whether respondents felt what blacks went through in slavery in the United States was equivalent to, worse, or much worse than what white immigrants to America had to endure; the second item asked whether the lower level of housing, education and jobs of black Americans in general was due to black themselves, discrimination against blacks, a combination of both factors, or something else; the third item asked respondents who they think are more trustworthy--blacks, whites, or both equally; and the final question asked respondents on a three-alternative response--yes,

no, or don't know--about their willingness to have a black person as a family member, a close friend, a neighbor, a colleague at work, a British citizen, a visitor to Britain, and whether blacks should be entirely excluded from Britain. These items used in this question were indexed to a single summary score as a measure of "prejudice" by summing up scores of each item with weight, ranging from one to seven in the order presented above.[16] The first three questions in the racial attitude measures were used by Hur and Robinson in their research in "Roots" in the United States and subsequently provided a direct comparison with the present analyses.[17]

Results

Viewing Patterns: Moderate to heavy exposure to "Roots" was reported, with 68% of respondents watching at least part of the series. About 25% of the respondents reported watching all six episodes, 21% between 4 and 5 episodes, and 22% between 1 and 3 episodes. Across the sample, the mean number of "Roots" episodes seen was just more than 3. Not surprisingly, the viewing rates for the panel sample were somewhat higher than for the British viewing public as a whole when compared to daily television rating figures compiled on separate samples by the BBC Audience Research Division. Daily viewing surveys on separate samples put the average viewing figure per "Roots" episode at 34%, compared to 47% per episode viewing rate for the panel sample. On the other hand, these viewing rates would be perfectly consistent with the refusal of non-viewers of "Roots" to participate in this particular survey. While this 34% viewing rate was well above the 19% average figure for BBC Film Programs shown on BBC-1 at the same time slot for the twelve weeks preceding the "Roots" broadcasts, it was also well below the average 46% viewing figure for the British-made "Forsythe Saga" which was shown on BBC-2 opposite to the "Roots" broadcasts. Apparently, then, "Roots" failed to evoke the same level of attention

from the British television audience than it had in America. In the United States, the "Roots" series, broadcast on eight consecutive nights from January 23-30, 1977, recorded the average 45% rating and 66% share and has become the most watched program in television history.

Did demographic and attitudinal factors influence exposure to "Roots" among the British audience? Mass communication researchers have long noted that demographic factors such as race, age, sex, education and social class, and audience attitudes, beliefs and values differentiate viewing of television programs.[18] Particularly in racial-oriented television programs such as "All in the Family," "Sanford and Son," and "the Jeffersons," race and racial attitudes appeared to be the most powerful discriminators of viewing and reaction to such programs.[19] Regarding the impact of "Roots," Hur, Hur and Robinson, and Surlin demonstrated the similar results. Also, two studies examining the impact of "All in the Family" in foreign lands (one for the Canadian audience and the other for the Dutch audience of "All in the Family) found a significant relationship between prejudice/authoritarianism and viewing/perception of the series: high prejudiced or authoritarian persons were less likely to watch the program.[20]

In order to see whether demographic and racial attitudinal factors influenced exposure to "Roots," we divided the respondents into viewers and non-viewers of "Roots" and compared the two groups in their racial attitudes and demographic characteristics by means of the chi-square statistic. For comparative purpose, we also included the U.S. data collected by Hur and Robinson on the common items.[21] As seen in Table 1, no significant difference was found for British viewers and non-viewers of "Roots" in their racial attitudes and on some items, the two groups were virtually identical. Moreover, British viewers and non-viewers gave virtually identical responses to a series of questions measuring their behavioral choices for having a black person as a family member, a close freind, etc. Only

difference was found for the item asking respondents whether they are willing to have a black person as a close friend, with 9% of viewers and 15% of non-viewers saying "no" to the question (x^2=10.8, df=2, $p < .001$). We also checked relations between degree of viewing the "Roots" episodes and racial attitude measures through correlational analyses and found that degree of viewing was not correlated with any of the racial attitude measures, i.e., conception of slavery hardships, cause of blacks' poorer housing, education and jobs, and race trustworthiness. Results of both the chi-square and correlational analyses, then, hardly suggest that selective exposure to "Roots" was at work for the British audience. There was little evidence that British non-viewers of "Root" avoided "Roots" because they were more prejudiced against blacks. In fact, when asked why they did not watch the program, many non-viewers of "Roots" said that they were simply "not at home"(20% of the 259 non-viewers of "Roots"), "other commitments intervened" (14%), "not interested" (13%), or "watched other programs" (11%). About 13% of non-viewers said that the subject matter was "unappealing" and other 10% said the subject matter was "too cruel, violent, or disturbing." From this qualitative analysis, then, interest in the program appeared to be key factor for watching the series.

--INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE --

The patterns of relationship between viewing "Roots" and racial attitudes found for the British sample were contrasting to those for the American sample included in Table 1. Table 1 shows a significant difference between American viewers and non-viewers of "Roots" on the item dealing with race trustworthiness and some difference on the position that black slaves had it no worse than white immigrant groups. Moreover, when asked about their opinion on open housing (not appeared in Table 1), almost 90% of viewers were in favor of the principle of open housing compared to 76% of non-viewers; conversely only 10% of viewers were opposed to open housing, compared to 24% of non-viewers, a difference that is

also significant at the .01 level. In contrast to the British patterns of viewing "Roots," the American patterns of viewing the series, at least from the data used here, support the selective exposure hypothesis; high anti-black Americans were less likely to watch the "Roots" series.[22]

As demographic variables affecting exposure to "Roots," social class appeared to be the only significant discriminator for the British sample. Not only was there a significant difference between British viewers and non-viewers of "Roots" in their social status, but also a significant relationship between degree of viewing the series and social class among the British viewers of "Roots" ($r=.11$, $p < .005$); working, middle class British viewers were less likely to watch the series than upper class viewers. This is not surprising for a serious foreign entertainment program shown on BBC, however. Age and sex of respondents did not discriminate their viewing of the series. In the U.S. sample, in contrast, age and, to some degree, sex operated significantly in exposure to "Roots."[23]

Viewing Reactions/Feelings: How did the British viewers of "Roots" react to the series and what emotional feelings did they express in response to the series? The analyses below, thus, concerned only those respondents who viewed at least part of the series and attempted to reflect the basic structure of these reactions and feelings including the purity of factors and the inter-item correlations constituting the factors. Also, the relationships between viewer reactions, racial attitudes and demographic factors were examined.

Overall, British viewers of "Roots" gave the series a positive rating. On a five-point reaction summary scale running from positive to negative on the basis of the 13 adjective items that were designed to elicit viewer reactions, 72% of "Roots" viewers were on the positive side; only 7% were on the negative side. However, there was some inter-item variation, with the average correlation between the summary reaction score and the 13-item measures reaching at .49.

Table 2 presents means for each of the 13 items on a five-point scale representing the relevant polarized adjective description about the program. Almost all the items had means between 3.5 and 4, indicating a positive reaction to various aspects of the program. Particulary, the "Roots" viewers described the program was "exciting, enlightening, believable, significant, and easy to understand," and the subject matter of the program was "very important." The major exceptions were the predictability and pace of the program, with a majority of viewers taking a neutral position there.

-- INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE --

What was the basic structure of these reactions? Table 3 provides the summary of the data on the 13 items as factor analyzed across all the viewers of "Roots." Using a minimum eigenvalue of 1.0, three factors emerged from the analysis. Only the largest loading was presented for each item as the magnitude of these individual loading was such that few items overlapped significantly on any other factor. As could be noted in the table, the first factor emerged consisted of those items dealing with the believability and significance of the series; a less clear item in this factor was viewer involvement in the program. Thus, we named this factor a "believability/significance" dimension. This factor accounted 82% of the common variance among the items and the correlations among this set of 7 items averaged .50. The second factor included those items that touched on excitement, predictability, dialogue, and pace of the program, and was identified as an "entertainment" dimension. This "entertainment" factor accounted for 10% of the variance and the average intercorrelation was .25. The final third factor emerged consisted of the three items--taste, suitability for family viewing, and understandability. Except for the last item, then, the third factor clearly dealt with the "ethical" dimension of the program and was, therefore, identified as such. This factor accounted for 8% of the common variance, and the three items correlated on the average .41.

-- INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE --

These identified viewer reaction factors were then correlated with viewing frequency of "Roots," racial attitudes and demographic variables to determine what factors influenced or were related to the patterns of viewer reactions to the series. To undertake this analysis, the scores of the largest loaded items on each of the three factors were summed in order to compute a single measure for each factor. Thus, seven scores were summed for the "believability/significance" factor, four items for the "entertainment factor," and three items for the "ethical" factor.

Table 4 shows that degree of viewing the "Roots" series was the strongest correlate of all three dimensions of viewer reactions to the series. The more episodes of "Roots" the British viewers watched, the more positive reactions they would give to all three dimensions. At the same time, however, there was a tendency for more frequent viewers of "Roots" to give more positive reactions to the believability/signficance and ethical judgment of the series than to the entertainment aspect of the program. Two of the racial attitude measures-- an indexed prejudice measure and an opinion on the cause of blacks' low level of housing, education and jobs-- operated significantly on all three dimensions, while conception of slavery hardships and endorsement of race trustworthiness were significantly related to only the believability/significance and ethical dimensions. Overall, however, there was a strong tendency for less prejudiced (or more liberal) viewers in racial matters to see greater credibility, significance, suitability for family viewing, and better taste of the program. Entertainment aspect of the program was not uniformly influenced by the racial attitudes of the viewer. This suggests, in contrast to the exposure pattern of the series, that some selectivity was at work for the viewers' perceptions of the series.

--INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE --

As demographic variables affecting the viewer reaction factors, social status and educational level of the viewer discriminated well for the believability/signficance and entertainment aspects of the program. Age of the viewer was related to the entertainment factor and the viewer's sex discriminated the believability/signficance factor.

Viewing Gratifications: Uses and gratifications research has well documented a number of different things people derive from their media consumption.[24] Obtaining information from the British viewers of "Roots" about their interpretation of the program's content and the use of this content was crucial, because this interpretation and use represents the structure of viewers' thoughts, values, and attitudes toward the series.

Table 5 presents a summary of the data on viewing gratifications of "Roots" as factor analyzed from the scores of 23 individual gratification measures. The full set of 23 itemsis presented in the Appendix. As was for the case of viewing reaction analysis, the principal factor analysis, with varimax rotation using a minimum eignevalue of 1.0, was performed, and the largest factor loadging was presented for each item. From this analysis, we could identify five major independent sets of gratifications derived from watching "Roots" among the British viewers of the series.[25]

-- INSERT TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE --

The largest number of items constituted the first factor, with 11 items loaded highest on this factor. This factor accounted 69% of the common variance and the average intercorrelation among the items was .43. A closer look at the individual items constituting this factor indicated two major types of gratifications: the first set of items dealth with viewers' attitude change toward race and race relations and, on one occasion, their wishes to take social action to improve race relations; the second set of items dealt with viewers'

personal identity in which viewers related the program content to their own personal life or community situation. It appeared to be difficult for viewers to separate their attitudes toward the program from their own personal experience or situation.

The second factor emerged consisted of three items and accounted for 12% of the variance. This factor was identified as "confirmation," because "Roots" made the viewer confirm his previous ideas about slavery, remind him of his reading about slavery in the past, and helped him to understand reasons for racial discontent in America. The average inter-item correlation was .44.

The third factor consisted of three items that reflected a less clear pattern of viewing gratifications. The first item dealt with the use of "Roots" viewing for interpersonal discussion, the second for escape from the tensions of everyday life, and the third for the viewer's desire to find out his own family history. Although not clear, we considered this factor as gratifying social relations as the three items somewhat dealt with the use of "Roots" viewing for social and personal interactions. This factor accounted for 8% of the common variance, and the average intercorrelation was .31.

The two items that clearly dealt with learning of slavery history formed the fourth factor, accounting 7% of the common variance. Here, "Roots" gave the viewer a great deal of information about the history of black slavery in America. The two items correlated .49.

The final fifth factor that emerged firmly was the use of "Roots" viewing as a means of diversion. The viewers said that "Roots" helped to pass time, was a waste of time, good to turn to when he was alone. This factor accounted for only 5% of the variance, and the average intercorrelation was .15.

The next task was to determine how these identified factors of gratifica tions were influenced by, or related to viewing frequency of "Roots," viewing reactions to the series, racial attitudes and demographic variables. We treated

viewing gratifications as the dependent variable, because the viewer's social, psychological, and behavioral perspective in response to "Roots" was derived from his exposure to the program and could be considered "incidental" to primary intent of being entertained. To undertake this analysis, we repeated the same procedure as was done for the factor scores of viewing reactions by summing the scores of the legitimate items on each of the factors emerged in Table 5. However, one exception was made for the first factor in Table 5. We split this single factor into two, since qualitative analysis of this factor clearly demonstrated two types of gratifications, which we labeled "attitude change" and "personal identity" respectively.

Table 6 shows that degree of viewing the "Roots" episodes and viewing reactions to the program in terms of the three identified factor dimensions--believability/significance, entertainment, and ethical judgment-- operated significnatly and uniformly on all of the six gratification factors. The direction of relationships among these two sets of variables indicated that the more episodes of "Roots" the viewer watched and the more positive reaction he gave to the believability/significance, entertainment, and ethical aspects of the series, the less likely he considered the program was "waste of time" and for passing the time. Higher viewers of "Roots" showing positive reactions to it were more likely to derive positive attitudes, values, and social learning out of the program. Particularly, the believability/significance dimension of viewer reactions appeared to be the most powerful discriminator of different responses on all six gratifications. As the viewer more often said the program was entirely believable, significant in the subject matter, enlightening, etc., he would more likely to say that the program changed his attitude toward blacks, made him understand the plight of blacks in America, made him want to do something to improve race relations, etc.

-- INSERT TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE --

Conception of slavery hardships also operated signficantly and uniformly on all gratification dimesions. This was not surprising, since this particular racial attitude question was directly related to the subject matter of "Roots." Other racial attitude measures, particularly race trustworthiness, did not operate uniformly on all gratification factors. They discriminated well for gratifications for attitude change and personal identity, but not for others. Interestingly, however, higher prejudiced viewers were more likely to consider the program as a means of diversion or passing time than were lower prejudiced viewers, suggesting another selectivity in viewing gratifications process.

Sex was a correlate of each of the gratification factors; the female viewer appeared to attain more positive gratifications from watching "Roots" than the male viewer. Education and social class also differentiated well for all gratifications except for diversion. High educated and high social status viewers were more likely to derive positive things from watching series. Age was significantly related to only "reaffirmation" of previous ideas and knowledge as gratifying, indicating that the older viewer had previous ideas about slavery which was confirmed by "Roots" viewing.

Summary

The present study has demonstrated the utility of uses and gratifications approach to the assessment of cultural effects of exported television shown in foreign lands. Serious television entertainment imported from America as exemplified by "Roots" evoked as much, if not more, positive reactions from British viewers as from American viewers and provided them important viewing gratifications in terms of their attitude change toward black race and American blacks in particular, their personal and community identification, reaffirmation of their ideas about slavery, and their learning of slavery history. In addition to the relative prominence of five major viewing gratifications in terms of

the variance each of the factors accounted for, the mean scores calculated for each of the gratification factor items indicated that the major gratification functions were "reaffirmation" of ideas about slavery (a mean of 2.3 on a five-point agree-disagree scale), followed by "learning of slavery history" (a mean of 2.5) and "attitude change" (a mean of 2.8); the use of the program for a means of "personal identity" was neutral (a mean of 3.1) and that for a means of "diversion" was negative (a mean of 3.7).

While some argue that television viewing experience could not be extracted and applied to post-viewing gratifications,[26] our findings show that viewing experiences as expressed through viewer reactions to the series were significantly related to the viewer's different uses and interpretations of the program's content. This suggests that psychological process of watching television can be linked to attitudinal perspectives derived from watching television, although further study is needed to isolate this process to the specific content of television programs.

Although our findings show that "Roots" did not evoke the same level of attention from the British television audience than it had in America, it was hard to imagine that an imported television program prior to its presentation would have a foreign audience more receptive to its message than in the country for which it was originally produced and targeted. In contrast to the selective exposure process noted in the American audience, furthermore, hardly a suggestion of a significant difference was found between British viewers and non-viewers of "Roots" in their racial attitudes, suggesting that selective exposure was not at work for the British audience. There was little evidence to suggest that anti-black Britshers avoided the series in any great numbers than those who were pro-blacks. It was, then, the matter of interest and taste, and demographic characteristics of the British television audience which

determined exposure to "Roots." However, once the British television audience was exposed to "Roots," a majority of its viewers were likely to experience positive aspects of the program's content and to structure their own thoughts, values and attitudes through viewing gratifications to the desired direction as intended in the program's content. Our data indicate that only a minority of British "Roots" viewers reacted negatively to the series and used its viewing for escape or diversion from everyday's pressure; between 8% and 15% of the viewers thought the series was not believable or not significant, and between 15% and 20% said that the program was "a waste of time," or "helped them to escape from the tension of everyday life."

Overall, then, our findings, in contrast to the findings by Tate and Surlin, Vidmar and Rokeach, and by Wilhoit and de Bock, persons in the culture into which the foreign television show was imported apparently reacted to the show as much positive as did in the domestic culture and may have been even more receptive to its message. While further study is needed to assess differential effects of various imported television programs when they are shown in a foreign land, serious television entertainment dealing with important history and social issues such as "Roots" appeared to have siginificant effects on foreign viewers.

NOTES

1. See Herbert I. Schiller, "Freedom From the 'Free Flow,'" Journal of Communication, 24:110-117 (Summer 1974); Kaarle Nordenstreng and Tapio Varis, "The Nonhomogeneity of the National State and the International Flow of Communication," in George Gerbner, Larry P. Gross, and William H. Melody, eds., Communications Technology and Social Policy (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1973), pp. 393-412.

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9. James W. Carey and Albert L. Kreiling, "Popular Culture and Uses and Gratifications: Notes Toward an Accomodation," in Jay G. Blumler and Elihu Katz, op. cit., pp. 225-248.

10. "Why 'Roots' Hit Home," Time (February 14, 1977); Peter Schillaci, "Roots on TV Touched Us All," Media and Methods (April 1977), pp 22-29.

11. "Tears and Fury--South Africans Pack Theaters to See 'Roots,'" Washington Post wire (May 30, 1978).

12. "'Roots' Takes Over in Japan," Washington Post wire (Novmeber 6, 1977)

13. "Why 'Roots' Hit Home," op. cit.; Schillaci, op. cit.

14. Stuart H. Surlin, "'Roots' Research: A Summary of Findings," Journal of Broadcasting, 22:309-320. Also see Robert C. Balon, "The Impact of 'Roots' on a Racially Heterogeneous Southern Community," Journal of Broadcasting, 22: 299-307; John Howard, George Rothbart and Lee Sloan, "The Response to 'Roots': A National Survey," Journal of Broadcasting, 22: 279-287; K. Kyoon Hur, "Impact of 'Roots' on Black and White Teenagers," Journal of Broadcasting, 22: 289-298; K.K. Hur and John P. Robinson, "The Social Impact of 'Roots,'" Journalism Qaurterly 55:19-24 (Spring 1978).

15. K. Kyoon Hur of University of Texas at Austin and John P. Robinson of Cleveland State University conducted a survey research in Cleveland regarding the social impact of "Roots," and part of the questionnaire used in their survey was included in the British survey at the request of John P. Robinson when he consulted the BBC Audience Research during January-August 1978.

16. The complete set of questionnaire used by the BBC Audience Research can be obtained from the first author of this paper.

17. K. Kyoon Hur and John P. Robinson, op. cit.

18. Raymond A. Bauer, "The Audience," in Ithiel de Sola Pool, Wilbur Schramm, et. al., eds. Handbook of Communication (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1973), pp. 141-152; Robert T. Bower, Television and the Public (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973); James W. Carey, "Variations in Negro/White Television Preferences," Journal of Broadcasting, 10:359-366 (Summer 1976); Bradley S. Greenberg and Joseph R. Dominick, "Racial and Social Class Differences in Teenagers' Use of Television," Journal of Broadcasting, 13:331-344 (Fall 1969); William J. McGuire, "Psychological Motives and Communication Gratification," in Jay G. Blumler and Elihu Katz, op. cit., pp. 167-196.

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20. Neil Vidmar and Milton Rokeach, op. cit.; Eugene D. Tate and Stuart H. Surlin, op. cit.

21. K.K. Hur and John P. Robinson, op. cit.

22. For further information, see K.K. Hur and John P. Robinson, op. cit.

23. Age and sex remained significant predictors of exposure to "Roots" in the multiple regression analysis; see Hur and Robinson, op. cit.

24. Jay G. Blumler and Elihu Katz, op. cit.

25. The complete factor loadings and correlation matrixes for the two factor analyses conducted in this study are available from the author at request.

26. Jean Cazeneuve, "Television as a Functional Alternative to Traditional Sources of Need Satisfaction," in Jay G. Blumler and Elihu Katz, op. cit., pp. 213-224; James W. Carey and Albert L. Kreiling, "Popular Culture and Uses and Gratifications: Notes Toward an Accomodation," in Jay G. Blumler and Elihu Katz, op. cit., pp. 225-248; Horace Newcomb, TV: the Most Popular Art (Garden city, New York: Anchor Books, 1974).

TABLE 1

COMPARISONS FOR VIEWERS AND NON-VIEWERS OF "ROOTS"
ON THEIR RACIAL ATTITUDES AND DEMOGRAPHY

	British Sample (N=814)			U.S. Sample (N=529)		
	Viewers (N=555)	Non-Viewers (N=259)	P	Viewers (N=389)	Non-Viewers (N=140)	P
Racial Attitudes						
Hardships of black slavery compared to those of white immigrants						
Roughly the same	6.9%	5.5%		25.9%	40.2%	
Worse	36.9	38.3		38.2	36.8	
Much worse	46.0	41.1		35.9	23.0	
Don't know	10.2	15.0	N.S.	-	-	<.07
Cause of blacks' poorer housing, education and jobs than whites'						
Blacks themselves	4.1	4.5		14.6	14.7	
Discrimination	27.1	23.1		55.6	48.0	
Combination of both	65.6	70.4		29.8	37.3	
Something else	3.3	2.0	N.S.	-	-	N.S.
Who are more trustworthy?						
Blacks	.7	0		5.1	5.8	
Whites	8.1	6.1		18.1	38.5	
Both equally	91.2	93.9	N.S.	76.8	55.8	<.001
Demography						
Sex						
Male	39.3	43.6		40.4	48.6	
Female	60.7	56.4	N.S.	59.6	51.4	N.S.
Age						
15-19	7.7	8.5		-	-	
20-29	22.5	19.7		40.2	31.0	
30-49	42.9	47.5		36.1	33.3	
50 and above	26.8	24.3	N.S.	23.7	35.7	<.001
Education						
Some high school	31.7	25.2		21.0	21.6	
High school graduate	46.5	48.2		34.7	39.1	
College and more	21.8	26.5	N.S.	44.3	39.3	N.S.
SES						
Low	9.2	13.5		-	-	
Middle	43.6	51.4		-	-	
Upper	47.2	35.1	<.005	-	-	N.S.

TABLE 2

ITEM MEANS FOR REACTIONS TO "ROOTS"[1]

Item	Mean
Very boring-Very exciting	3.74
Not at all believable-Entirely believable	3.76
Left me cold-Involved me closely	3.63
Predictable-Unpredictable	2.93
Not at all enlightening-Very enlightening	3.70
Trivial-Significant	3.81
In bad taste-In good taste	3.87
Not at all convincing-Very convincing	4.09
Unsuitable for family viewing-Suitable	3.72
Dialogue phony-Dialogue believable	3.46
Not at all important-Subject very important	3.97
Difficult to understand-Easy to understand	4.36
Not at all authentic-Visually very authentic	3.91
Too slow-moving-Too fast-moving	2.99

1. The problem of missing data was not serious, with Ns' of respondents on the items ranging between 535 and 549 out of the total of 555 viewers of "Roots."

TABLE 3

ITEM FACTOR LOADINGS FOR VIEWING REACTIONS

Factor 1 (Believability/Significance)	Loadings
Believable	
Involvement	.62
Enlightening	.70
Significant	.81
Convincing	.51
Subject important	.59
Visually authentic	.50
Factor 2 (Entertainment)	
Exciting	.55
Predictable	.43
Dialogue phony	.54
Too fast-moving	.30
Factor 3 (Ethical Judgment)	
In good taste	.60
Suitable for family viewing	.56
Easy to understand	.59

TABLE 4

CORRELATES OF VIEWING REACTION FACTORS[1,2]

	Factor 1 (Believability/Significance)	Factor 2 (Entertainment)	Factor 3 (Ethical Judgment)
Degree of "Roots" Viewing	.32	.27	.32
Conception of Slavery Harships[3]	-.22	-.06	-.22
Cause of Blacks' Low Level of Housing, Education and Jobs	-.12	-.13	-.14
Race Trustworthiness	-.09	-.04	-.08
Indexed Prejudice Measure	-.13	-.12	-.16
Sex (Male-Female)	-.18	-.06	-.03
Age	.01	-.11	.01
Education	.09	.09	.01
Social Class	.17	.13	.03

Notes: 1. Ns for inter-item correlations vary, with ranging between 522 to 555; the lowest N was for the prejudice measure. However, these small differences among a set of relationship would not affect correlation values.

2. Correlations between .08 and .10 were significant at the .05 level; .11 and .13 at the .01 level; .14 and above at the .001 level.

3. For the measures of racial attitude items, see Table 1; the higher the score, the more liberal or the less prejudiced a person was.

TABLE 5

ITEM FACTOR LOADINGS FOR VIEWING GRATIFICATIONS[1]

Factor 1 (Race Attitude Change/Personal Identity)	Loadings
Think about my own life (3)	.51
Greater understanding of human nature (8)	.50
Realize colored people's position (10)	.52
Remind of own good fortune (11)	.62
Tolerate black militants (12)	.67
Want to do something to improve race relations (16)	.62
Face truth about man's inhumanity to man (18)	.58
Understand own community (19)	.63
Appreciate the plight of American Negro (20)	.55
Less irritated with other people (21)	.53
Increase respect for other people's way of life (23)	.55
Factor 2 (Reaffirmation)	
Confirm previous ideas about slavery (4)	.57
Understand reasons for racial discontent (6)	.51
Remind past readings in slavery (7)	.72
Factor 3 (Social Relation)	
Share with family and friends (1)	.54
Escape from everyday's tension (2)	.42
Find out own family history (5)	.47
Factor 4 (Learning)	
Learn what life was like for black slaves (14)	.57
Information about slavery history (15)	.56
Factor 5 (Diversion)	
Pass time (9)	.47
Put the boot in when it's needed (13)	.28
More important things to do (17)	.23
Good to turn to when I was alone	.53

1. Ns' of respondents on these individual items ranged from 535 to 539 resulting in between 16 and 20 missing cases for the analysis.

TABLE 6

CORRELATES OF VIEWING GRATIFICATION FACTORS[1,2]

	Factor 1 (Race Attitude Change)	Factor 2 (Personal Identity)	Factor 3 (Reaffirmation)	Factor 4 (Social Relations)	Factor 4 (Learning)	Factor 6 (Diversion)
Degree of "Roots" Viewing	.21	.16	.13	.34	.27	-.22
Believability/ Significance	.56	.47	.49	.48	.48	-.20
Entertainment	.28	.26	.22	.34	.22	-.13
Ethical Judgement	.28	.23	.25	.31	.19	-.14
Conception of Slavery Hardships	.19	.12	.20	.10	.15	-.21
Cause for Blacks' Low Level of Housing, Education and Jobs	.18	.15	.09	.08	.10	-.08
Race Trustworthiness	.14	.08	.03	.04	.04	-.12
Indexed Prejudice Measure	.24	.18	.13	.11	.03	-.11
Sex	-.23	-.14	-.18	-.10	-.22	.11
Age	.05	.06	.13	.06	.03	-.04
Education	.13	.18	.11	.17	.15	.03
Social Class	.16	.19	.12	.13	.18	-.02

Notes: 1. Ns for inter-item correlations ranged from 503 to 537, with between 20 and 50 missing cases. These missing cases would not affect the pattern of relationships presented above, however.

2. The level of significance for individual correlations was the same as that of Table 4.

APPENDIX

A FULL SET OF GRATIFICATION ITEMS ANALYZED

Indicate whether or not you agree that each of the statements listed below applied to you when you were watching any of the programs in the series "Roots."

1. Roots gave me something to share and talk about with my family and friends.
2. Roots helped me to escape from the pressures and tensions of everyday life.
3. Roots helped me to think about my own life.
4. Roots confirmed my previous ideas about slavery.
5. Roots made me want to find out more about my own family history.
6. Roots helped me to understand why there is so much racial discontent in America.
7. Roots helped to remind me of what I had read in the past about slavery.
8. Roots helped me to have a greater understanding of human nature.
9. Roots helped me to pass the time when I didn't feel like doing anything in particular.
10. Roots made me realise that coloured people have every reason to distrust white people and, in some cases, hate them.
11. Roots helped to remind me of my own good fortune.
12. Roots made me want to try and be more tolerant of Black militants.
13. Roots helped me to feel that it's not too bad a thing 'to put the boot in' when I think it's needed.
14. Roots helped me to learn what life was like for Black American slaves.
15. Roots gave me a great deal of information about a part of history I previously knew very little about.
16. Roots made me want to do something to improve race relations in Britain.
17. Roots helped me to remember that I have more important things to do than watch television.
18. Roots helped me to face the truth about 'man's inhumanity to man'.
19. Roots helped me to understand what is going on in my own community.
20. Roots gave me a greater appreciation of the plight of the Negro in the United States today.
21. Roots left me feeling less irritated with other people than before I started viewing.
22. Roots was good to turn to when I was alone.
23. Roots helped to increase my respect for other people's way of life.

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